

Glossary of Assessment Terms

Academic Program – According to NYS Education Department, an academic program is organized around the set of educational requirements necessary to qualify for a registered degree. The curriculum or program includes general education or specialized study in depth in a particular field, or both (NYSED, 2012).

Artifacts – The work produced by students while engaged in a learning experience.

Analysis of Findings - Examination of the data gathered during the assessment cycle, including reflective consideration about what actions, if any, should be taken.

Action Plans - Actions taken to improve the program or assessment process based on the analysis of results; “Closing the loop.”

Assessment – The measure of the extent to which goals have been met; provides specific evidence of strengths and areas needing improvement.

Assessment process – The systematic collection, review, and use of information about student learning, educational programs, student support programs, and college services undertaken to improve teaching/learning and institutional effectiveness.

Assessment Plan - A document which outlines how and when selected outcomes will be assessed.

Assessment Report - An annual document based on the Assessment Plan that presents and explains assessment results and shows how assessment results are being used to improve the program.

Benchmark - A standard or point of reference against which things may be compared or assessed.

Course-embedded Assessments – Direct methods to assess student-learning that are well integrated into and organic to the educational experience.

Course Student Learning Goals (CSLG) – the measurable learning/knowledge/skill expectations for all students completing an academic course, documented in the syllabi and program review documents. Direct measures are to be used; indirect measures/results will be used to support the direct measure findings. CSLG are identified by faculty, described in the course syllabus, and it is the faculty of each course who determine what to measure and the tool to use for this faculty-driven process.

Course Operational Goals –focus on the functioning of the course, rather than the learning achieved by the students. Examples include development of new courses, deletion of a course, edits to a course, and course mapping to program goals.

Course Syllabus – A document that lays out the expectations, including the learning goals, for a single course.

Curriculum Map – A matrix representing a program's learning goals and indicating where they are developed in a program and to what extent.

Direct Methods of Assessment – Measures used to document student performance. Examples of direct measures include rubrics for capstone projects, portfolios, papers, and performances.

Findings - Results (evidence, data and/or information) gathered from assessment.

Formative Assessments – Assessments that occur throughout the learning process that aim to understand and, therefore, improve learning.

Indirect Methods – Measures used to assess students' perceptions of their learning and educational experiences. Examples of indirect measures include surveys, focus groups, and interviews.

Institutional Priorities –In consultation with the Board of Trustees the college President identifies the College's institutional priorities for the year. All goals are linked directly to the College's Strategic Plan and are executed at the Divisional level. Independent divisional goals may also sometimes inform and direct new strategic initiatives or institutional goals through the established strategic planning processes.

Institutional Student Learning Goals – The measurable student learning goals that are realized in the complete educational experience, both curricular and co-curricular. At Utica College, the key intellectual skills are the institutional learning goals.

Mission Statement - A concise statement outlining the purpose of a program, who it serves, and what distinguishes it.

Program Student Learning Goals (PSLG) – the measurable learning/knowledge/skill expectations for all students graduating from a particular curriculum/major or students being served by a particular unit.

Program Operational Goals – Goals set for and by a program, usually during the 5-year program review process. However operational goals may be set during a review for an external accreditor or in the interim between program reviews. Operational goals address the functioning of the program.

Program Review – required self-study process completed by each academic program. It is usually conducted on a five-year rotation, unless external program accreditation cycles require a different review time line.

Rubric - Specific sets of criteria that clearly define for both student and teacher what a range of acceptable and unacceptable performance looks like. Criteria define descriptors of ability at each level of performance and assign values to each level.

Target - A value that indicates whether or not a goal has been achieved.

Validity - The extent to which an assessment measures what it is supposed to measure and the extent to which inferences and actions made on the basis of test scores are appropriate and accurate.

Value added – Evidence that shows the effects educational providers have had on students during their programs of study beyond what would have occurred through natural maturation. A comparison of the knowledge and skills students bring to the educational process with the knowledge and skills they demonstrate upon completion of the educational process.